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**INCOMING
TELEGRAM**

PAGE 01

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ACTION OFFICE PDM-01

INFO ACOC-01 DSO-02 DIS-01 PD-02 NEA-03 PG-01 /011 A1 21

R 231137Z FEB 87

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO RUENIA/USIA WASHDC 5979

INFO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3725

RUSBPW/AMCONSUL PESHAVAR 7807

BT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ISLAMABAD 04151

USIA

FOR P/DH, INFO NEA, P/G

STATE FOR NEA/PAB, NEA - PLEASE PASS TO AMB. DUNBAR
AND AMB. HINTON

E.O. 12356: OADR

SUBJECT: AFGHAN MEDIA PROJECT.. NEXT STEPS

REF: (A) ISLAMABAD 3691 (B) USIA 10024

1. BU'S HICK MILLS HAS JUST PROVIDED US WITH A COPY
OF HIS RECOMMENDATIONS TO JOACHIM HAYTRE ABOUT WHERE
TO GO NEXT ON THE MEDIA PROJECT. THE TEXT OF HIS
MEMO IS AS FOLLOWS:

2. QUOTE. BASED ON MY EXPERIENCE AND OBSERVATIONS
IN PESHAWAR, PAKISTAN I AM RECOMMENDING REJECTION OF
THE MERCY FUND PROPOSAL. IN MY ESTIMATION THE
PROPOSAL IS FAR TOO COSTLY AND AMBITIOUS AND I ALSO
BELIEVE IT WOULD DILUTE THE EFFECTIVENESS AND -
CREDIBILITY OF OUR EFFORT BY COMBINING IT WITH MF'S
HUMANITARIAN NEWS SERVICE, PUBLISHER OF A SPECIAL
INTEREST DIRECT-MAIL NEWSLETTER.

I BELIEVE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE AFGHAN MEDIA PROJECT
ARE TO 1) TRAIN QUALIFIED AFGHAN MUJAHEDIN IN BASIC
MEDIA SKILLS, AND 2) CREATE A MECHANISM FOR
WIDESPREAD DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATION GATHERED BY
THESE TRAINED PERSONS THROUGH LEGITIMATE NEWS
CHANNELS. THE FIRST OBJECTIVE IS BEING MET WITH THE
CURRENT TRAINING OF 34 AFGHANS AND A PLANNED SECOND
SESSION FOR APPROXIMATELY 30 MORE IN APRIL. THE
SECOND OBJECTIVE, DISTRIBUTION, CAN BE EFFECTIVELY
ACHIEVED, IN MY OPINION, BY MEANS OF A SMALL-SCALE,
INEXPENSIVE EFFORT BASED IN PESHAWAR AND OVERSEEN BY
THE PROJECT DIRECTOR AT BOSTON UNIVERSITY. FURTHER,
I BELIEVE THAT THE SCALE OF ORGANIZATION OUTLINED IN
THE MF PROPOSAL IS NOT JUSTIFIED BY THE EXISTING OR
POTENTIAL QUANTITY OF MARKETABLE INFORMATION COMING
OUT OF AFGHANISTAN.

A QUALIFIED JOURNALIST/ADMINISTRATOR (WESTERN) WITH A
STAFF OF AFGHAN ASSISTANTS AND REPORTERS/CAMERAMEN
COULD FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY AS A LEGITIMATE NEWS
ORGANIZATION WHICH WOULD SUPPLEMENT THE EFFORTS OF
EXISTING AFGHAN INFORMATION GROUPS WITHOUT PUTTING
THEM OUT OF BUSINESS, SOMETHING ABOUT WHICH THEY ARE
ALL CONCERNED. B.U., THROUGH ITS GRANT, COULD ALSO
PROVIDE THE OTHER AFGHAN GROUPS WITH HIGH-QUALITY
CAMERAS TO ASSIST THEIR NEWS GATHERING EFFORTS; THIS
WOULD BE A MORE EFFECTIVE USE OF THE GRANT MONEY THAN
CREATING A LARGE NEW ORGANIZATION.

I RECOMMEND THAT IMMEDIATE STEPS BE TAKEN TO
IMPLEMENT THIS PLAN, INCLUDING: 1) RECRUITMENT OF
TRAINEES FOR A SECOND TRAINING SESSION FOR FOUR (4)

WEEKS IN APRIL; 2) RENTAL OF A RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY
IN PESHAWAR WHICH WOULD SERVE AS THE TRAINING AND
OFFICE SITE; 3) RECRUITMENT OF A QUALIFIED WESTERN
JOURNALIST/ADMINISTRATOR TO RUN THE OPERATION IN
PESHAWAR BEGINNING APRIL 1; 4) LEASE OR PURCHASE OF A
SUITABLE VEHICLE FOR TRAINERS AND ADMINISTRATOR.

DETAILED BUDGET PLANNING WILL BEGIN IMMEDIATELY WITH
MY RECOMMENDATIONS TO BE FORWARDED TO B.U. BY MARCH
1.

I ALSO BELIEVE THAT THE ABOVE MIGHT OVERCOME THE
PROBLEM OF CREATING AN OFFICIAL A.M.S. WITH A
GOVERNMENT-APPROVED DIRECTOR. WE HAVE SEEN WHAT A
TREMENDOUSLY DIFFICULT TASK THIS HAS BECOME,
POLITICALLY, AND UNDERSTAND THAT THE LIKELIHOOD OF
ITS COMING TO FRUITION IS VERY SLENDER. IF WE CAN
OPERATE ON AN UNOFFICIAL, LOW-PROFILE LEVEL OUR
CHANCES OF SUCCESS ARE ENHANCED.
PLEASE NOTE THAT EVEN THIS PLAN DEPENDS ON THE
SUCCESS OF LOCAL DISCUSSIONS.

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PAGE 01

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23/1144Z

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ACTION OFFICE PDH-01

INFO .ACCC-01 OSO-02 DIS-01 PD-02 NEA-03 PG-01 /011 A1 21

R 231137Z FEB 87

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO RUEBIA/USIA WASHDC 5980

INFO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3727

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 ISLAMABAD 04151

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FOR P/DH, INFO NEA, P/G

STATE FOR NEA/PAB, NEA - PLEASE PASS TO AMB. DUNBAR
AND AMB. HINTON

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ALSO, THE APRIL TRAINING DATE IS OPTIMISTIC. WE WANT
TO MAKE SURE THAT THE NEXT CLASS OF TRAINEES HAS THE
RIGHT STUFF, AND THE RECRUITING/SCREENING MAY DELAY
THE START DATE. THERE IS ALSO SERIOUS CONSIDERATION
BEING GIVEN TO AVOIDING THE MONTH OF MAY FOR TRAINING
BECAUSE OF CONFLICT WITH RAMAZAN.

PLEASE ADVISE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE ON HOW YOU WISH TO
PROCEED. END QUOTE.

3. WE WOULD ADD THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

5. IN THE MEANTIME, WE ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT MERCY
FUND IS PUTTING TOGETHER A PROPOSAL WHICH WE HAVE
SEEN IN DRAFT; WHICH WILL BE SUBMITTED TO USIA AND
USAID FOR MERCY FUND'S ASSUMPTION OF RESPONSIBILITY
FOR THE MEDIA PROJECT UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THEIR
HUMANITARIAN NEWS SERVICE. WHILE WHAT WE SAW IS ONLY
A DRAFT, WE NOTE SOME DOWNSIDES. AMONG THEM: THE
ASSUMPTION OF USAID FUNDING (W
ICH SEEMS TO BE
UNCERTAIN AT BEST), SOME FAIRLY STEEP ADMINISTRATIVE
COSTS, AND THE FUNDING OF WHAT SEEMS TO US TO BE A
COMPLETELY UNNECESSARY WASHINGTON OFFICE.

6. BU IS NOW IN ITS FOURTH WEEK OF TRAINING, WITH
THE PRESENT PROGRAM SCHEDULED TO END IN MID-MARCH.
AT THAT POINT, MILLS AND KELLY PLAN TO TAKE A MONTH'S
VACATION, LEAVING O'REILLY ON HAND TO COORDINATE THE
SELECTION OF THE NEXT GROUP OF TRAINING CANDIDATES.
WHILE IN THE ABSENCE OF A DECISION ON AN AFGHAN
DIRECTOR AND NO IMMEDIATE PROMISE THEREOF (SEE REFTEL
A), WE THINK WE HAVE THE LATITUDE TO GO AHEAD WITH A
SECOND "INTERIM" TRAINING PROGRAM, UNWANTED PUBLICITY

(SEE REFTEL B) COULD TURN THIS ASSUMPTION ON ITS HEAD
AND COULD, IN FACT, BLOW THE W
OLE PROJECT OUT OF THE
WATER.

7. WE BELIEVE THAT NEITHER BU NOR MERCY FUND, IN ANY
OF THE DOCUMENTATION WE HAVE SEEN SO FAR, REALLY
GIVES ADEQUATE ATTENTION TO THE DISTRIBUTION
MECHANISM FOR WHATEVER MATERIAL IS PRODUCED BY ITS
TRAINEES -- EITHER AS MEMBERS OF AN INDEPENDENT
AFGHAN NEWS AGENCY OR AS MEMBERS OF THE STAFFS OF
EXISTING ORGANIZATIONS. MILLS, IN A COVERING NOTE
TO ME ON HIS REPORT TO MAITRE, SAYS THAT THE
MARKETING OF THE SERVICE WOULD BE ACCOMPLISHED
"PRIMARILY BY DIRECT MAIL." THIS WOULD BE LITTLE
DIFFERENT FROM WHAT THE EXISTING ORGANIZATIONS ARE
PRESENTLY DOING. WHILE LIP SERVICE IS PAID TO IT, WE
DO NOT BELIEVE THAT EITHER ORGANIZATION -- BU OR
MERCY FUND -- HAS REALLY INTELLECTUALLY PLUGGED INTO
THE PROPOSED SHUTT DISTRIBUTION STRUCTURE. WE URGE
THAT THIS SUBJECT BE GIVEN MORE SCRUTINY BY P/DH.

8. ON THE GOOD NEWS SIDE OF THE LEDGER, HOAGLAND AND
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EXCISION

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PAGE 01

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23/11442

ACTION OFFICE PDH-01
INFO ACDC-01 DSO-02 DIS-01 PD-02 NEA-03 MA-01 MAST-04 MAS-01
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R 231137Z FEB 87
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO RUEHIA/USIA WASHDC 5981
INFO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3728
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MILLS REPORT THAT THEY BELIEVE THEY HAVE FOUND AN
EXCELLENT CANDIDATE TO BE BU'S MAN ON THE GROUND IN
PESHAWAR AFTER THE TRAINING PROGRAM ENDS. THIS IS
FREE LANCE FILM MAKER STEPHEN OLSSON WHOSE
"AFGHANISTAN: THE FIGHT FOR A WAY OF LIFE" WAS
RECENTLY SHOWN ON PBS AND GENERATED GOOD REVIEWS.
OLSSON IS CURRENTLY IN PAKISTAN AND APPEARS TO BE
BOTH AVAILABLE AND INTERESTED.

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